

interests came into collision with the consumer were not a few. Wyclif, with his almost modern devotion to the conception of a unitary society overriding particular interests for the common good, was naturally prejudiced against corporations, on the ground that they distracted social unity by the intrusion of sectarian cupidities and sinister ambitions ; but there was probably from time to time more than a little justification for his complaint, that " all new fraternities or gilds made of men seem openly to run in this curse [against false conspiratours]," because " they conspire to bear up each other, yea in wrong, and oppress other men in their right by their wit and power,"<sup>al</sup> It is significant that the most striking of the projects of political and social reconstruction produced in Germany in the century before the Reformation proposed the complete abolition of gilds, as intolerably corrupt and tyrannical."

There are, however, monopolists and monopolists.

An age in which combinations are not tempted to pay lip-service to religion may do well to remember that the characteristic, after all, of the mediaeval gild was that, if it sprang from economic needs, it claimed, at least, to subordinate them to social interests, as conceived by men for whom the social and the spiritual were inextricably intertwined. " Tout ce petit monde antique/" writes the historian of French

gilds, " ^tait  
fortement imbu des id6es chretiennes  
sur le juste  
salaire et le juste prix ; sans doute il y  
avait alors,  
comme aujourd'hui, des cupidit^s et des  
convoitises  
mais une rfegle puissante s'imposait   tous  
et d'une  
maniere generate exigeait pour chacun le  
pain quotidien  
promis par FEvangile."<sup>23</sup> The attempt to  
preserve  
a rough equality among " the good men  
of Qhejnistry/<sup>1</sup>  
to check economic egotism by insisting  
that every  
brother shall share his good fortune with  
another and  
stand by his neighbour in need, to resist the  
encroach-  
ments of a conscienceless money-power,  
to preserve